

MARKET RESEARCH ON BRAȘOV COMMUNITY ISSUES

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Abstract: *The article is based on a quantitative market research of the opinion poll type which quantified the opinions and attitudes of the adult population of Brasov on some major issues: „the quantification of the mass-media market”, „the main community issues”, „the voting preferences” – organized in 3 stages: October 2005, March 2006 and June 2006. The opinion poll for the first stage was carried out between the 7th and the 16th of October and focused on the direct interviewing based on a questionnaire containing 61 direct questions, a number of 1051 subjects aged no less than 18, the second stage was scheduled for March 15th-26th and involved the use of a questionnaire of 78 questions, with a number of 1998 subjects having been interviewed. The final stage took place in the second half of June 2006 and focused on quantifying the opinions of nearly 1802 interview subjects. We should also mention the fact that, for the second and the third stage of the „opinion gauge”, the questionnaire also had an additional section with questions which aimed at quantifying the opinions of the adult citizens of Brasov on their interest towards „loisir”.*

Keywords: market research, opinion poll; local mass-media market; the priorities of the local community.

1. Introduction

The research quantified the opinions and the attitudes of the inhabitants of Brasov (18 of age or over) concerning certain essential issues: „mass-media market quantification”, „main community issues” and „voting preferences” in June 2006. This article only contains the results for the „main community issues” section, as the Brasov City Hall asked to keep the results for the rest of the sections confidential, agreeing to publish only the data from the nominated section.

The opinion poll was carried out between June 29th and July 9th 2006 (actual field data collection) and focused on the direct interviewing using a questionnaire which contained 77 direct questions, a number of 1802 subjects aged over 18.

The age ranking of the interviewed subjects took into account the following criteria:

- Subjects were 18 or over, as we wanted to interview those ones who are interested in elective market.

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- On age group level, we intentionally allotted a higher percentage to those over 60 years of age (19,4%) because they also represent a high percentage in Brasov's population structure, according to the results of the last population census carried out in the spring of 2002.
- We made sure that the percentage of the population actually employed on the labor force market (caution! – it should not be mistaken for the active population) to be approximatively half the volume of the final sample used in the research (see the interviewees in the 30-39, 40-49 and 50-59 years age groups).

We wanted to insure a maximum $\pm 2.2\%$ error, which imposed a random multistaged probability sampling method – allowing us to generalize the results for the entire Brasov population over 18 of age. The field data collection supposed the use of a number of 27 interview operators which were first selected and trained by Multi Consulting Group.

Approximatively 20% of the interviews carried out were verified by phone to identify the possible errors or even elusions in the regulation received by each operator as a specific guide.

The research was based on standard sampling criteria: age, sex and residence area. Moreover, we must not omit the fact that, in order to insure an appropriate representativeness of the sample to be used, but also to eliminate the possible sampling errors or those contained in the questionnaire, we created between the 20th and the 21th of July a so-called „pilot study” which supposed the random sampling of a number of 180 subjects (approximatively 10% of the final sample).

Taking into consideration the results of this pilot-study, we draw the conclusion that the most appropriate respondents distribution according to the residence area should include the 17 areas we used, which allowed a maximum dispersion on the Brasov county level, including the so-called suburban neighbourhoods: Noua, Darste, Stupini, Triaj, Craiter. For the big neighbourhoods, they were divided on zones and subzones, which allowed the sampling to work correctly on this level, as well.

Likewise, we also took into consideration other sampling criteria such as: education level (last graduated school), the number of family members, current respondent occupation and the net monthly revenue for their families, so that we could have a broad perspective on the researched issue.

2. Research results

The survey was carried out within the Brasov municipality, *using a representative sample for the population over 18 years of age from the city of Brasov.*

The main marketing data obtained are, in our opinion, the following: the citizens of Brasov are very fond of the city they live in, 23,1% of them considering it „beautiful”.

There is no major change compared to the previous survey concerning the image the citizens of Braşov have about their city, and yet, more and more respondents consider their city „*beautiful*”. Their percentage increased from 22,2% (in March 2006) to 23,1% (in June 2006). The percentage of the respondents who associate the term „mountain” to Braşov increased with 10,2 points. The image of a „touristic city” dropped to the third place, from 13.5 to 10.3%. On the other hand, „home town” and „sanitation” dropped by 1.3%, and 3.1% respectively.

A great part of the respondents – 78.4% think that Braşov will better evolve in the future in comparison with other important Romanian cities, while 72.5% declared themselves generally satisfied with the activity deployed by the new Braşov local administration.

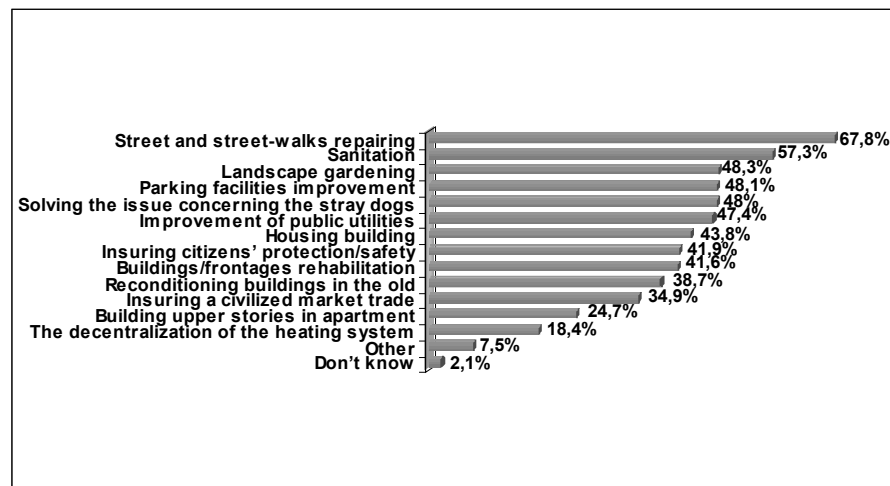


Figure 1. The main issues the current Braşov local administration leaders have to solve

Note: The percentages are not included and are added to the total number of respondents to this question.

For many of the citizens of Braşov, the main issues that need to be solved by the current local administration leaders are: street and streetwalks repairing (67.8%), sanitation (57.3%), landscape gardening (48.3%), parking facilities improvement (48.1%), solving the issue of stray dogs and trash bin bears (48%), public utilities improvement: electrification, sewerage, gas pipes, telephony, public transportation (47.4%), house building (48.5%), insuring citizens protection/security (41.9%).

Three months ago, the citizens of Braşov thought street and sidewalks repairing was the most important problem the local administration was confronted with, followed by sanitation and landscape gardening. According to this year's survey, the order did not modify much, as the first positions are still the same.

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In October 2005, the citizens of Brasov considered street and streetwalk repairing the most important issue the local authorities had to deal with, followed by sanitation and citizens' safety/security.

The questionnaire also focused on outlining citizens opinions about the most important achievements of the present local administration, so 84,9% of the interviewees concluded that the 3 main achievements and the most often nominated ones were: streets and streetwalks asphaltting – 69.4%, landscape and playgrounds management – 49.7%, sanitation – 38.1%, infrastructure – 34.8%.

Out of the 1786 interviewees, 82.8% stated their opinion on the 3 priorities the local administration should diligently solve, so the most cited ones were: street repairing 26.9%, sanitation – 21.5%, parkings construction – 15.1%, house building – 12.4% and the bears issue – 10.4%.

This survey also intended to quantify the opinions the citizens of Brasov have about the tram line and the trolley bus lines which cross the city; so, 55.9% of the respondents think the tram should be replaced by another means of public transportation, as the maintenance costs are too high, while 28.4% consider it should be kept/improved.

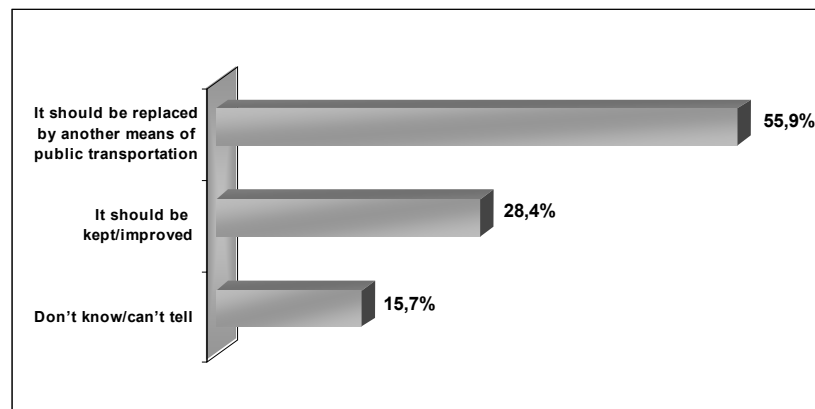


Figure 2. Citizens opinion on the tram line

Out of those who want the tram line to be replaced, 84.4% (855 subjects) think the tram should be replaced with buses, 7.9% (80 individuals) chose the variant of a rapid tour bus and 4.6% (26 subjects) and 3.9% (40 subjects) the trolley bus.

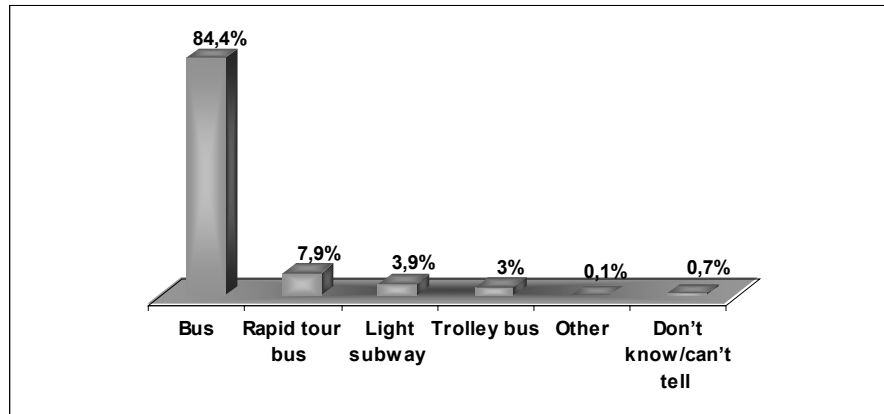


Figure 3. Means of public transportation to replace the tram

On both surveys, most of the respondents considered the tram should be replaced by buses. The present survey reported an increase by 2% compared to the one carried out in March 2006. The percentage of those who chose the rapid tour bus dropped by 0.3 and by 1.8% for those who chose the trolley bus respectively, compared to the previous survey.

In order to facilitate traffic, 1036 respondents (57.5%) think the bus should be replaced with another means of public transportation, most of them – 80.9 (854 subjects) – declare that trolley bus should be replaced by buses, while only 16% (169 persons) chose the rapid tour bus variant.

The most important action to be taken in order to improve public transportation is the renewal of the car fleet – 1058 nominations, 59% respectively, followed by the reviewing of tickets and subscriptions fees – 983 nominations, 54.9% respectively and the observation of the station schedule – 964 nominations – 53.9%.

The important aspects related to Brasov's infrastructure are in respondents' opinion the following: street repairing (main, secondary streets, alleys, streetwalks) – with an average score of 4.63, the foundation of a new emergency clinic – 4.49, the improvement of the municipal sewerage system – 4.43 the construction of the Bucharest – Brasov highway – 4.39, the relief road for Brasov – 4.37.

Analysing from a comparative point of view the data with those provided by the March 2006 survey, we can observe that respondents consider (in both surveys) the street repairing as a highly important aspect in town's infrastructure. The building of a relief road for Brasov gained 0.08 points in the last three months, but lost 3 positions, while the improvement of the municipal sewerage system is considered almost as important, placing it on the third position in their preferences. The new option introduced in the survey – the Bucharest – Brasov highway, is situated on the 4th position, with an average of 4.39 points, thus overtaking the selective garbage collection, which lost 0.17 points and 7 positions in the list of the most important issues related to Brasov's infrastructure.

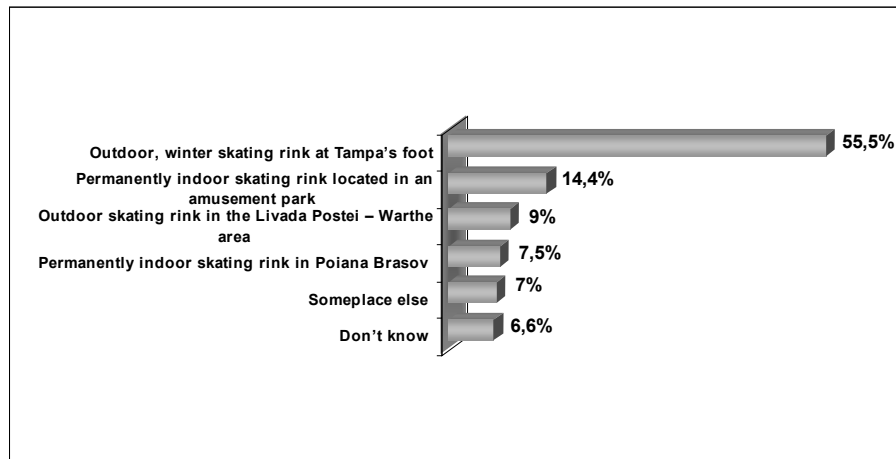


Figure 4. Respondents' options on building a skating rink

The subjects were also questionned about the idea of building a skating rink in Brasov. Thus, 91.7% of the respondents believe this would be necessary, while 952 subjects agree to have a outdoor skating rink biult beneath Tampa for the winter season only – 55.5%.

Likewise, most of the subjects consider that it would be useful to build an amusement park in theBrasov area – 91.2%, and they think that the best location for it would be the city of Brasov – 78.9%. The amusement park should have cars (73.8%), roller coasters (70.8%), water and standard coasts (67.1%) and kid trains (64.8%).

Brasov's city council founded the „Touristic Information Center” at Casa Muresenilor from Piata Stafului; 37.1% of the respondents have never resorted to its services, but have heard about it.

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